

REMARKS

The objections to the drawings and specification have been overcome by the amendments made to the paragraph on page 14. In particular, the objection to the drawing has been overcome by including a reference to “step 6” in the text of the paragraph on page 14. In addition, that same paragraph has been amended so that the two references to reference number 26 has been change to number 18, as is suggested in the Action.

The rejection of claim 12 as lacking an antecedent basis for “the nuclear fuel rods” has been overcome by amending claim 12 to depend on claim 11.

The rejection of claims 1 to 5, 7 to 9, 10 to 14 and 16 to 18 as being obvious over Loftus (US Patent 4,740,349) in view of the Tech Con Twenty Five reference is traversed.

Loftus does not disclose a graphical image of a complex system that enables a user to: (1) select a imaged feature of the system to retrieve information regarding that feature (2) from multiple databases stored on a host computer for an information management program, as is recited in claim 1. With respect to the dependent claims, Loftus does not disclose a graphical image that appears as an array of nuclear fuel rods (claim 2); a graphical image of fuel rods linked to a first database of the operational history of each of the fuel rods and to a second database of information regarding the assembly of each fuel rod (claim 3); a graphical image showing an specific arrangement of fuel rods (claim 4); a graphical image that “changes as the user selects a different reactor” (claim 5); a security program that limits access to the first and second database (claim 6); a first video image of the feature represented by the graphical image (claim 7); a video image of the fuel rod assembly process (claim 8); or a video image of the fuel rod replacement process (claim 9).

Similarly, Loftus does not disclose several of the steps recited in independent method claim 10 including a graphical image of a complex system that shows features that can be selected to interact with an information on the management system, an image displayed on the remote terminal that allows the user to select a feature to retrieve data from first and second databases and to display the retrieved data. Loftus also does not disclose many of the limitations of the dependent method claims including: a graphical image of a nuclear fuel rods (claim 11); the graphical image is linked to first and second databases regarding the operation history of fuel rods and the assembly of those rods (claim 12); the graphical image shows an array of nuclear rods in a specific arrangement (claim 13); the arrangement of fuel rods changes as the user selects a different reactor to display on the terminal (claim 14); a security program (claim 15); and video imaging of the complex system, fuel rod assembly process and fuel rod replacement process (claims 16, 17 and 18). Because Loftus does not disclose many of the limitations of the claimed apparatus and method, Loftus does not render obvious any of the claimed subject matter.

Loftus teaches away from the claimed invention by disclosing “operability trees” as a means for a user to manage. To manage the regulations and specifications governing in a nuclear power plant, Loftus discloses a “operability trees” that model the plant systems and components. Loftus, column 2, lines 20-25. Operability trees are a different means to access the complex system than is the system image recite din the rejected claims. In addition, Loftus discloses several databases that contain information regarding the status and date/time for each piece of equipment modeled in the operation trees (FIDTB Table). Loftus, column 11, lines 45-47. Loftus does not disclose a first database having information related to the complex system or a second database also having information related to the complex system as is recited in claim 1, wherein both databases are accessed by a user via a graphical image displayed on a remote

terminal. While the claimed system requires that two databases be accessed by a graphical image, Loftus teaches that the data is arranged in logical trees and accessed through text commands. There is no teaching in Loftus to use graphical interfaces that represent the system or that extracts information from at least two databases. Accordingly, Loftus teaches away from the claimed invention.

The Tech Con Twenty Five presentation shows exemplary screen displays for a “e-audit” system. The e-audit disclosure of the Tech Con presentation does not disclose the database that underlies the screen shots. In particular, there is no disclosure of how the graphical user interface is used or whether the selection of an individual fuel rod icon on the graphical screen retrieves data from multiple databases. Accordingly, the Tech Con disclosure does not teach the missing elements from the claims that are not disclosed in the Loftus patent.

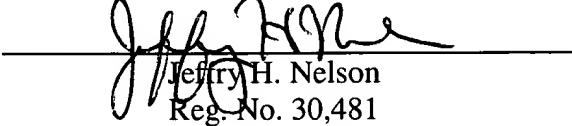
Further, the Tech Con presentation is made by the General Electric Company which is the assignee of this application. The Tech Con Twenty Five presentation shows screen shots similar to Figure 1 of the present application. Tech Con Twenty Five does not show the steps shown in Figures 4 through 7 of this application which relate to interacting with a graphical user interface to access multiple databases to retrieve information selected via the graphical user database. Accordingly, Tech Con Twenty Five presentation does not suggest the claimed invention alone or in combination with the Loftus reference.

BRYAN et al
Appl. No. 09/842,785
August 16, 2005

All claims are in good condition for allowance. If any small matter remains outstanding, the Examiner is requested to telephone applicants' attorney. Prompt reconsideration and allowance of this application is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: 

Jeffrey H. Nelson
Reg. No. 30,481

JHN:glf
901 North Glebe Road, 11th Floor
Arlington, VA 22203-1808
Telephone: (703) 816-4000
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100